June 20, 2014

Lori Hagen, Second Deputy City Clerk
Office of the City Clerk
Providence City Hall
25 Dorrance Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Notice of Approval for amendment to Brown University's Institutional Master Plan (IMP)
   Applicant: Brown University

Dear Ms. Hagen:

The City Plan Commission (CPC) reviewed the amendment to Brown University's IMP on Tuesday, June 17, 2014 at a regular meeting. The CPC voted unanimously as described below to make certain findings of fact and to approve the amendment to the IMP.

IMP Amendment Overview

Section 503 of the Zoning Ordinance requires institutions to file an IMP with the CPC that describes the institution's proposed development over the next five years or more. The CPC reviews master plans and amendments for compliance with the City's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

Brown University's current IMP amendment describes proposed changes in property holdings, updates to the parking schedule, expansion of the school of engineering, rehabilitation of the South Street Power Station and improvements scheduled for Thayer Street.

The amendment identifies the Handbook for Physical Planning as the source of planning principles that will guide campus planning and design through this IMP cycle. The Handbook builds on the Strategic Framework for Physical Planning at Brown University developed in 2003. The six key planning principles are:

1. Prioritize academic uses on College Hill
2. Celebrate the Brown scale
3. Energize the Core with a mixture of uses
4. Engage Thayer Street
5. Connect the campus
6. Consolidate landholdings and catalyze partnerships
Summary
The changes to each component of the amendment are hereby summarized:

School of Engineering Expansion
The applicant intends to house the addition to the School of Engineering in a new building on Brook Street providing 80,000 SF of space adjacent to the existing school of engineering site. The building will house research space, clean rooms, faculty offices and support space. The existing Engineering School (Barus and Holley/Prince Lab) will be separated from the building by open greenspace.

The plan notes that construction of the building will require the demolition of four buildings located at 29 and 37 Manning Street and 333 and 341 Brook Street. Two of the buildings are occupied by the applied math program. The Public Archaeology Lab has conducted research on the houses and begun documentation of each structure.

A new structure providing 13,000 SF will be erected on a site now used as a parking lot at the corner of Hope and George Street to accommodate the displaced applied math labs. The building will transfer lot users to other sites and two large trees will be removed.

Rehabilitation of South Street Power Station
Brown University is partnering with the University of Rhode Island (URI) and Rhode Island College (RIC) to rehabilitate the South Street Power Station to provide administrative space for Brown and space for the URI and RIC nursing education center. Two floors will be added to the top of the building and entrances will be provided from Eddy Street and Point Street. A new parking garage and new graduate student housing at adjacent Davol Square will be built on the site.

Brown will be a long term tenant of the property and consolidate a number of administrative functions within the building.

Thayer Street Improvements
In 2013, Brown partnered with the City and various stakeholders to study the Thayer Street area. The study found the need for a strong management entity, physical improvements and a focus on non-retail commercial uses.

According to the amendment, Brown has created more space by widening sidewalks at the intersection of Thayer Street with Cushing and Meeting Street and adding street furniture. These efforts would coincide with other projects like the repaving and restriping of Thayer, Brook, Bowen and Meeting Streets, the construction of a parklet and improvement of the top of the bus tunnel. Brown will also work with Thayer Street merchants to address the conduct of business patrons.

Property holdings
The amendment includes an update to Brown’s land holdings detailing the sale of underutilized properties and those that are part of the Brown-to-Brown ownership program and acquisition of strategic properties.
Properties to be sold are 38 Taft Ave, 95 Brown Street, 93 Brown Street, 109 Brown Street, 134 Hope Street and 240 Bowen Street. 271 Thayer Street, the current location of City Sports will be acquired.
Parking and Transportation Plan
Brown provides a total of 2,774 parking spaces over more than 100 separate lots. That number includes parking spaces on the recently abandoned portions of Olive, Brown and Benevolent Street. The current parking supply projects a surplus of 231 spaces. Taking into account increases in staff and enrollment, the surplus is projected to increase to 249 spaces and includes spaces expected from future garages in the athletic complex and near the South Street power station.

FINDINGS

Providence Tomorrow
Strategy F of Objective LU-7 of Providence Tomorrow: The Comprehensive Plan requires educational institutions to provide five year IMPs to ensure that there is limited growth and negative impacts on neighborhoods. In addition, IMPs are expected to be updated with any new developments between plans. The CPC found that Brown satisfactorily described growth and changes that had occurred since the plan was last presented. By addressing how new development would affect surrounding neighborhood, the CPC found the amendment to be consistent with Strategies A and B of Objective LU-7.

The CPC found that the statement about the provision of parking and its effect on traffic management was consistent with Objectives M-1 and M-6, which promote provision of varied transportation and parking options.

Zoning Ordinance
The CPC found that the amendment followed the format prescribed by the Zoning Ordinance, including all required elements outlined in Section 503.4 (C). The CPC found the amendment to be consistent with the applicable regulations contained in the Zoning Ordinance.

ACTION

Based on the analysis and findings contained in this report, the CPC approved Brown University’s IMP amendment.

Please post this notice for 20 days.

Note that this approval does not require any action by the City Council.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Nickerson
Director of Long Range Planning

cc: Michael McCormick, Brown University